



Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea

Tourism, Arts & Heritage Cabinet

Abolitionist Portrayal Scheduled April 15 at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea

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BEREA, Ky. – On Sunday, April 15, actor Obadiah Ewing-Roush, of Louisville, will portray John G. Fee in a performance titled “John G. Fee – Abolition – Amen!” at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea. The performance at 2 p.m. is free and open to the public.



The Rev. John Gregg Fee (1816-1901) was born in Bracken County, Kentucky, the son of slaveholders John and Sarah Gregg Fee. John grew up knowing firsthand the profits that could be made from the slaves' labor.

Fee graduated from Augusta College, and went on to attend Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati. Unaware of the school's abolitionist reputation, Fee was unprepared for the anti-slavery arguments that surrounded him, but soon took up the cause to end slavery. This abolitionist stand was interpreted by his family as a betrayal of his father and upbringing, and Fee spent much of his life facing financial hardship, violence, and the wrath of his father while fighting for an immediate end to slavery.

Fee's anti-slavery efforts gained him the attention of the prominent politician and outspoken emancipationist Cassius Marcellus Clay, and while they agreed that slavery in the Commonwealth should end, they could not agree on how to go about ending the institution.

One of Fee's visions was to create a school where men and women, black and white, could learn together as equals. That dream came to fruition when he established Union Church of Christ, an anti-slavery, non-denominational church that would eventually lead to the founding of Berea College.

Obadiah Ewing-Roush, who portrays John G. Fee, received his M.F.A. in theatre arts from the University of Louisville. He has portrayed a variety of characters and persons including Polonius in “Hamlet,” Doc O'Conner and Dennis Shepherd in “The Laramie Project,” and Uncle Peck in “How I Learned to Drive.”

This free performance and portrayal of “John G. Fee – Abolition – Amen!” will be held Sunday, April 15, beginning at 2 p.m. in the private dining room of the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea. As a part of the Kentucky Humanities Council's Chautauqua Series, this program is funded in part by both the Kentucky Humanities Council Inc. and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea is located at 200 Artisan Way, just off Interstate -75 at Berea exit 77. The center's exhibits, shopping and travel information areas are open daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and the cafe is open from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Admission is free.

The center currently features works by more than 650 artisans from 100 counties across the Commonwealth and a special exhibition, “About Face: Kentucky Artisan Works Inspired by the Human Face,” on display through Aug. 26, and a lobby exhibit “Thinking Big: Oversized Works by

Kentucky Artisans,” on display through April 28. For information call 859-985-5448 or visit the center’s website at www.kentuckyartisancenter.ky.gov.

The Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea is an agency in the Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

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